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EAP PRESS GUIDANCE

TUESDAY, AUGUST 26, 1986

CHINESE ARMS SALES TO IRAN

Q: Do you have any comment on reports of a Chinese arms supply relationship with Iran?

A: THE CHINESE HAVE A PUBLICLY STATED POLICY OF REMAINING NEUTRAL IN THE CONFLICT AND SUPPORTING EARLY CESSATION OF THE WAR. WE THINK THAT'S A POLICY THEY OUGHT TO ADHERE TO.

Q. Have you been contact with the Chinese regarding the arms sales to Iran?

A: THEY ARE WELL AWARE OF OUR VIEWS. THE UNITED STATES HAS SYSTEMATICALLY URGED THIRD COUNTRIES NOT TO SELL ARMS TO IRAN AS THE ONLY EFFECTIVE WAY TO BRING IRAN QUICKLY TO ACCEPT MEDIATION/NEGOTIATION. WE BELIEVE ALL COUNTRIES SHOULD WORK FOR THE EARLIEST END TO THE CONFLICT WITH THE SOVEREIGNTY AND TERRITORY OF BOTH SIDES INTACT.

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Q. If the PRC continues to sell Silkworm missiles to Iran, why should we continue to sell arms to the PRC?

A. OUR DECISION TO SELL ARMS TO THE PRC WAS NOT DESIGNED AS A GRATUITOUS FAVOR TO THE PRC. THE US SELLS THE PRC ARMS BECAUSE OF A BELIEF THAT IT IS IN OUR STRATEGIC INTEREST TO DO SO, BECAUSE OF SHARED PERCEPTIONS AND GOALS IN THE REGION. WE VIEW THE MEASURED DEVELOPMENT OF A MILITARY RELATIONSHIP AS ONE ELEMENT IN A SINO-AMERICAN RELATIONSHIP DESIGNED TO SERVE OUR NATIONAL INTERESTS INTO THE 21ST CENTURY. FURTHERMORE, THE PRC IS NOT THE ONLY COUNTRY WITH WHOM THE U.S. MAINTAINS CLOSE RELATIONS WHOSE ARMS HAVE FOUND THEIR WAY TO THE IRAN IN RECENT MONTHS (AND YEARS). ALTHOUGH WE DO NOT THINK THAT A LEGISLATIVE REMEDY WOULD BE APPROPRIATE, WE DO SHARE YOUR CONCERN ABOUT THE IRANIAN ACQUISITION OF CHINESE SILKWORMS AND WILL CONTINUE TO COMMUNICATE THE DEPTH OF THAT CONCERN TO THE PRC. SINCE WE BEGAN COMMUNICATING THOSE CONCERNS TO THE CHINESE, THEY HAVE SHOWN A COOPERATIVE APPROACH AT THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL. WE ARE, HOWEVER, LOOKING FOR MORE FROM THE CHINESE, AS I SAID IN MY STATEMENT.

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